



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EST (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Wednesday - January 15, 2003

- ***In the West***, soil moisture remains mostly adequate in ***northern California and the Pacific Northwest***, but other areas from the ***Rockies westward*** continue to suffer from the effects of long-term precipitation deficits, including low reservoir levels, below-normal snow packs, and stressed rangelands.
- ***On the Plains***, beneficial snow is developing in a narrow band from ***Montana to eastern Nebraska***, providing winter wheat with some insulation in advance of anticipated cold outbreaks. However, soils remain mostly bare from ***western Nebraska southward***, with the greatest area of concern for winter wheat exposure on the drought-affected ***central High Plains***.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, snow showers are confined to areas downwind of the ***Great Lakes***. Elsewhere in the ***Midwest***, dry weather and frozen soils favor off-season fieldwork, although the recent turn toward colder conditions are increasing stress on livestock.
- ***In the South***, cool, dry weather favors a limited return to fieldwork, where soil conditions permit. However, fields in parts of the ***western Gulf Coast region*** and ***central Florida*** remain very wet.

Outlook: A round of wintry weather is in store for portions of the ***central and eastern U.S.*** for today through Friday. Snow will develop from portions of the ***central and northern Plains to the middle Mississippi Valley***, as a storm system tracks southeastward. In the ***East***, cold, dry weather will be replaced by increasing chances of snow in the ***Ohio Valley, Southeast, and Mid-Atlantic States***, with rain likely along the ***Gulf Coast***. Dry, mild weather will prevail ***west of the Rockies***. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for January 20-24 calls for drier-than-normal weather in the ***West*** and across the ***eastern half of the U.S.***, with wetter-than-normal conditions limited to the ***northern and central High Plains***. Below-normal temperatures will persist from the ***Plains eastward***, while warmer-than-normal weather will prevail ***west of the Rockies***.

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